Government of
Saskatchewan

Annual Report
1985-86

Women's Secretariat

For the fiscal year ended
March 31, 1986

Minister
Honourable Patricia A. Smith

Executive Director
Leah Siebold

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Minister's Letter of Transmittal

Minister
Responsible for
the Status of Women

Saskatchewan

Legislative Building
Regina, Canada
S4S 0B3

(306) 565-7380

Honourable Frederick W. Johnson
Lieutenant Governor of the
Province of Saskatchewan

Sir:

I hereby respectfully submit the annual report of the Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1986.

Patricia A. Smith
Minister Responsible for
the Status of Women

Honourable Pat Smith, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, and Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine discuss women's contributions to the economy while attending the First Ministers' Conference in Halifax on November 28-29, 1985. For the first time, women's issues were on the agenda at this important federal-provincial conference.

Executive Director's Letter of Transmittal

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat

1855 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Canada
S4P 3V5

Honourable Patricia A. Smith
Minister Responsible for
the Status of Women

Madam:

I am pleased to submit this annual report of the Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat for the fiscal year 1985-86.

It has been an exciting and challenging year for the staff of the Women's Secretariat, as our agency has been involved in a number of important projects. Chief among these was co-ordinating phase one of a comprehensive, government-wide planning process that will serve as a blueprint for future policy and program development.

Through major conferences for women entrepreneurs and public sector managers, we highlighted opportunities for advancement in these areas. We have assisted the Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women in their efforts to increase the representation of women on boards and commissions.

In the sphere of social policy, there has been an on-going effort to study and address particular problems such as family violence, enforcement of maintenance orders, sex-role stereotyping and pensions for homemakers.

In the upcoming year, we will continue to work co-operatively within government to increase opportunities for women's equal participation in all aspects of society.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Siebold

Leah Siebold
Executive Director

Leah Siebold, Executive Director of the Women's Secretariat, is the agency's permanent head and has deputy minister status.

Role of the Women's Secretariat

Co-ordinating Agency

The Women's Secretariat is Saskatchewan's agency for co-ordinating government policies and programs for women. It was created in January, 1984, reflecting the government's desire to respond effectively to women's needs and aspirations. It assists the government by providing research, policy analysis and administrative support on matters related to the status of women. The agency head, the Executive Director, reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Working Within Government

As a central agency, the Women's Secretariat works primarily within government to integrate women's concerns into the mainstream of all planning and policy-making.

Leah Siebold (left), Executive Director of the Women's Secretariat, discusses policy development options with the Honourable Pat Smith, Minister Reponsible for the Status of Women.

Secretariat staff analyze policies, legislation and programs for their impact on women. The Secretariat works co-operatively with other departments to identify areas of concern and to assist in program development. The agency is a mechanism for government-wide co-ordination of initiatives that involve a number of departments.

Government programs and services are equally available to all Saskatchewan people through line departments such as Advanced Education, Tourism and Small Business, Health, and the Employment Development Agency. The Secretariat's activities within government ensure that women's particular needs and perspectives are considered in development and delivery of these services. The Women's Secretariat offers information about various government programs, as well as a referral service.

Consultation

In Saskatchewan, there are numerous local and provincial organizations related to the status of women. Representatives from the Women's Secretariat consult with these groups to explain government programs and to invite suggestions for enhancing opportunities for Saskatchewan women.

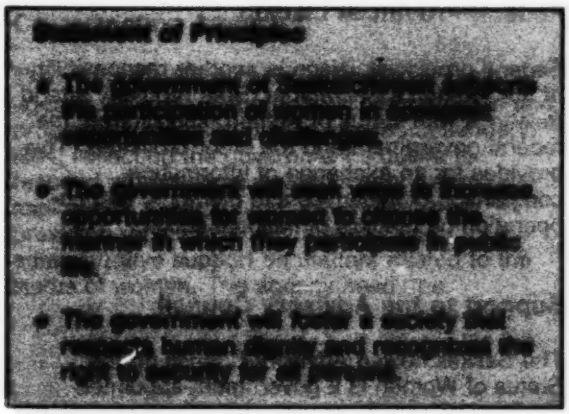
Federal-Provincial Liaison

Federal-provincial liaison is another responsibility of the Women's Secretariat. Staff regularly attend meetings with status of women officials from the federal government and the other provinces. This provides for an exchange of information, comparison of initiatives and methods, and co-operation on matters of national scope.

Support to the Advisory Council

The Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a government-appointed group of citizens from various fields of expertise and different areas of the province. The Council gathers public input and makes recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The Women's Secretariat provides clerical and administrative support to assist the Council in its work.

Planning for the Future

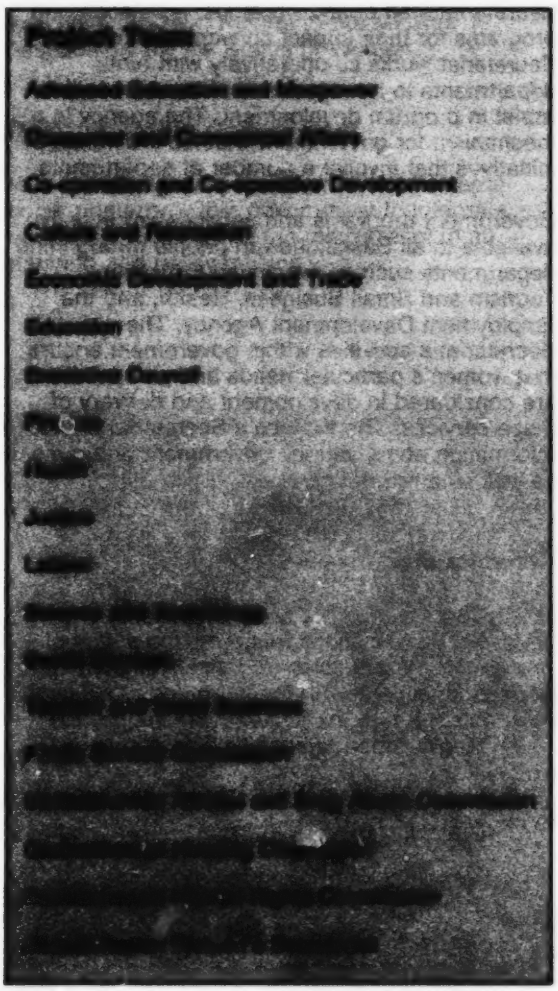


These three principles will guide government in developing future policies and strategies to increase opportunities for women in Saskatchewan. The principles were established as part of the Plan of Action to Enhance Opportunities for Women developed during 1985.

The conclusion of the International Decade for Women 1976-85 was a logical point to review progress and set a direction for the future. The Women's Secretariat took the lead role in an intensive government planning process that spanned several months and involved about 50 representatives from 19 departments and agencies.

To co-ordinate the planning process, a steering committee of deputy ministers was formed, along with a project team consisting of representatives from relevant government departments and agencies.

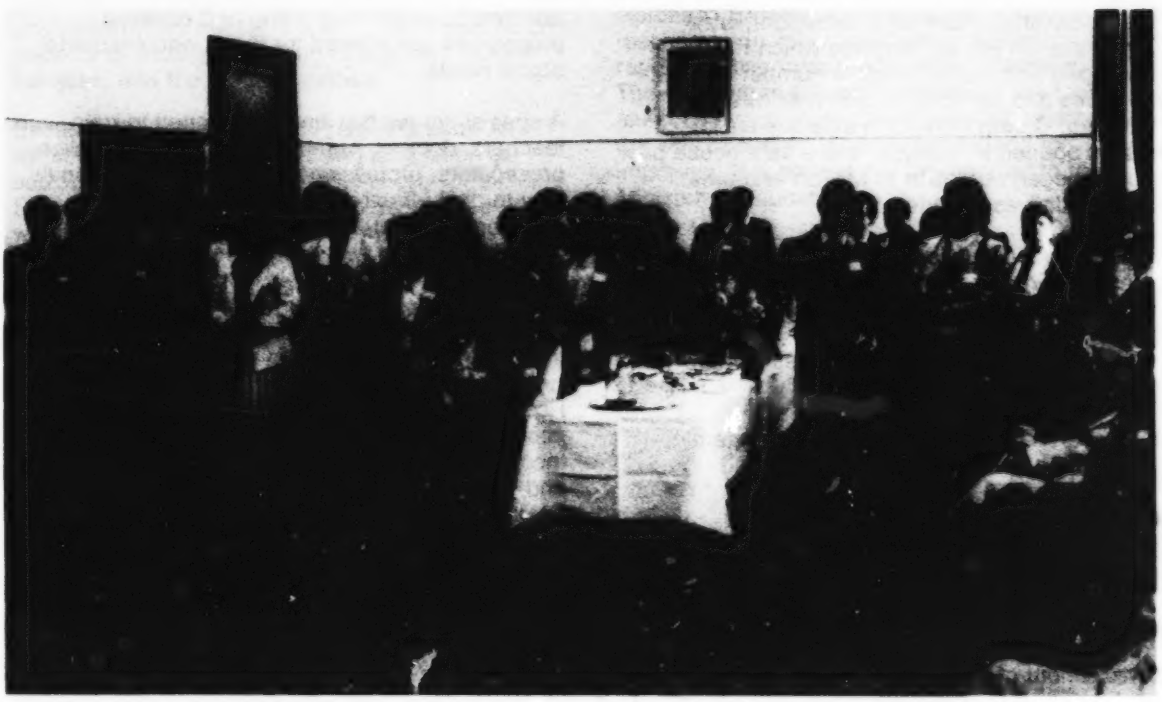
The project team established committees to address issues related to employment, education and training, social and health services, economic status, the legal and justice system, and women in public life. The committees examined current programs to identify accomplishments as well as opportunities for further progress.



The Plan of Action project team involved more than 50 representatives from 19 government departments and agencies.

Public opinion played a role, as the committees focused particular attention on issues raised in reports and briefs presented to government by various women's groups. In addition, the Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women was consulted for input and recommendations.

The result of the planning process was an internal framework that outlines direction for future government initiatives to improve the status of women in Saskatchewan.



Project Team members meet department heads and Cabinet representatives at a reception to mark completion of phase one of the planning process to increase opportunities for women.

Integrating Women's Concerns and Aspirations

The Women's Secretariat strives to integrate women's concerns into the planning and programs of all government departments. Through the Secretariat's efforts on various interdepartmental committees, there has been progress in a number of areas.

Family Violence

Violence against women was identified as an initial priority for the Women's Secretariat when the agency was founded in 1984.

The Secretariat chairs an Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence which has developed and implemented a number of programs and services to deal with wife battering. During 1984-85, a safe shelter for victims opened in Yorkton, and a safe house pilot project began operation in Melfort and area. Other initiatives included:

- Grant to the Public Legal Education Association for public education on legal aspects of family violence
- Funding to provide legal services to victims in rural areas
- Research project to study justice system response to cases of wife abuse
- Directives by the Attorney-General for prosecutors to lay charges against batterers without requiring a sworn statement from the victim

Progress continued throughout 1985-86 with development of new programs and pilot projects.

In 1985, the government funded a pilot project in Saskatoon that offers support group counselling to victims of wife abuse. A second support group project is planned for Regina.

A treatment program for men who batter was established through the Mental Health clinics in both Regina and Saskatoon. Batterers may volunteer for this program, or they may be referred by the courts as an alternative to jail sentencing.

The Interdepartmental Committee recognized that, in addition to direct services for families affected by violence, training and effective procedures are needed for those who encounter abuse cases.

A special course has been developed to train teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, police, prosecutors, professionals and paraprofessionals how to deal effectively with family violence situations. The course explains how to recognize wife abuse cases, what services are available, and how to help the people involved. Since October, 1985, this training course has been available from community colleges throughout the province, depending on demand.

Health care professionals are in a strategic position to identify victims of abuse and assist them in finding treatment. Saskatchewan base and regional hospitals, in conjunction with Saskatchewan Health, have developed a protocol for handling abuse cases. This has been made available to hospitals throughout the province, and a committee is presently studying measures for implementation, staff training and data collection.

In addition to the initiatives on wife battering, the government is concerned about the high incidence of child abuse. A special government committee has been reviewing the findings of the federal Badgely Report on Child Abuse to determine what measures might be effective in dealing with the problem in Saskatchewan.

SICCOA

As the baby boom generation matures, the next few decades will witness an increase in the proportion of senior citizens in the general population. This will have a profound effect on all aspects of society, including health care, social services, and the pension system.

Because the life expectancy rate is greater for women than men, an increasing proportion of seniors are women. In 1981, 53.4% of Saskatchewan residents over 65 years were women, and this is expected to increase to 57.6% by 2001. The growing gap in the gender ratio means that social networks and interaction patterns are interrupted, resulting in isolation and loneliness. More people, especially women, will be living on their own.

To begin the planning for these future challenges, the government has established a Standing Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee on Aging (SICCOA).

The Women's Secretariat is involved to ensure that the needs and perspectives of women are an integral part of the planning process.

Sex-Role Stereotyping

There is evidence to show that, by the time girls become teenagers, many have developed the perception that their role and career choices are limited to traditional ones. Women may be free to choose from the full range of educational and occupational opportunities, but they frequently make traditional choices based on the stereotyped images they see around them in books and magazines, on television and in existing role models.

The recently-revised Goals of Education for Saskatchewan schools have stressed the need for all students to consider the full range of career options and to make decisions based on their interests and abilities, not stereotypes.

Following through on this objective, Saskatchewan Education has established a Guidance Review Committee that includes teachers, principals, guidance counsellors, and a representative from the Women's Secretariat. The Committee has been reviewing the topic of stereotyping in guidance counselling offered by the school system. Recommendations for improving this service will be reported to the Minister of Education.

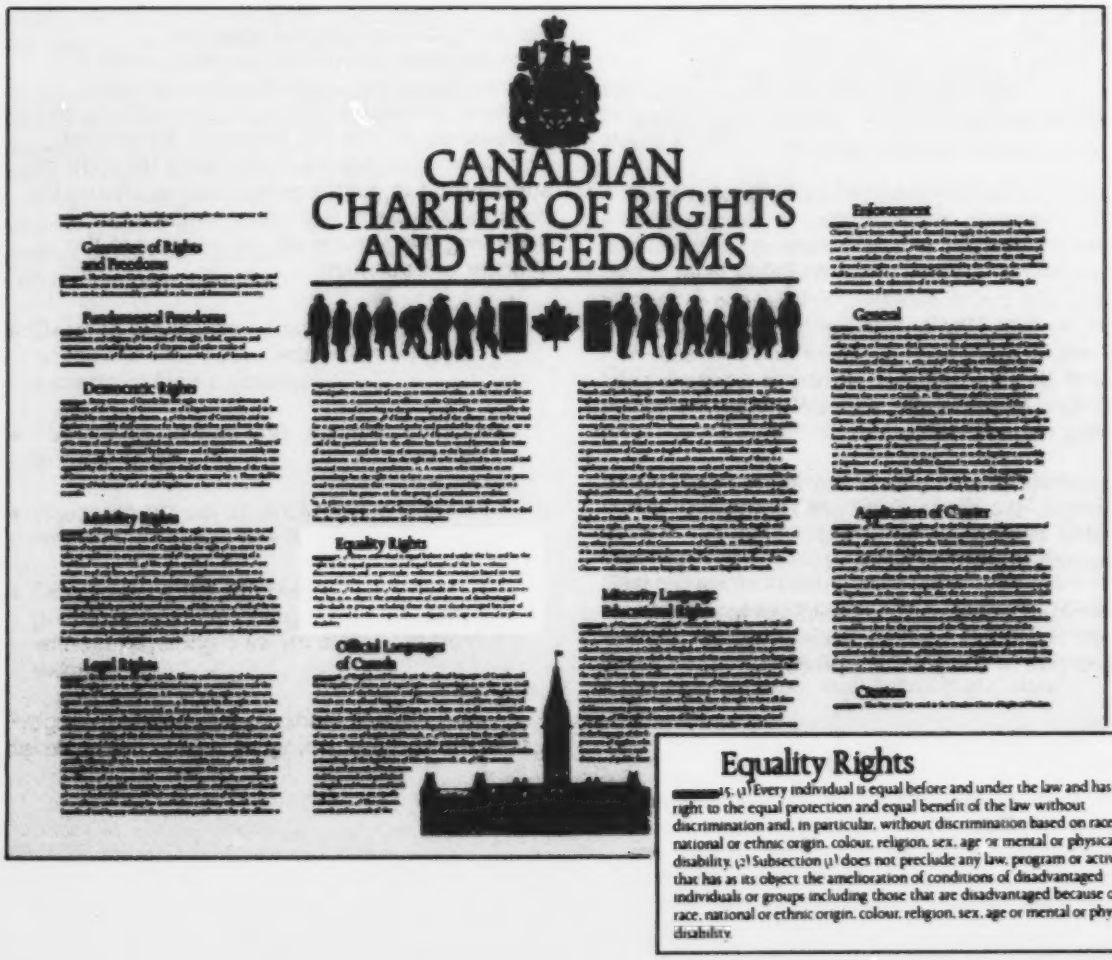
Legislative Reform

The Women's Secretariat is an advisor to government on new legislation and the review of existing laws that affect women. There were several significant events during 1985-86.

Charter of Rights

On April 17, 1985, the Equality Section (Section 15) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms became effective, making equality before and under the law a fundamental right for all Canadians.

When the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Rights was adopted in 1982, the equality provisions were delayed for three years to allow the federal and provincial governments time to revise any legislation that did not comply with the Charter.


CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS
Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms
Fundamental Freedoms
Democratic Rights
Mobility Rights
Legal Rights
Equality Rights
Official Languages of Canada
Minority Language Educational Rights
Enforcement
General
Application of Charter
Citation
Equality Rights
15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

In August, 1984, Saskatchewan's Attorney General issued a white paper which identified statutes to be reviewed. Copies of the discussion paper were sent to all major women's groups and interested parties to ask for their input. On April 17, 1985, the government introduced an omnibus bill to eliminate discriminatory wording and make the statutes comply with the Charter of Rights. This was a significant step in ensuring that Saskatchewan laws reflect the principle of equal opportunity. Further legislative reform may be needed as the interpretation and application of the Charter of Rights are clarified by the courts.

Enforcement of Maintenance Orders

A new program to help dependant spouses and children by enforcing maintenance orders was implemented in Saskatchewan in March, 1986.

The newly-created Maintenance Enforcement Office began registering court orders with a mandate to enforce payment through warnings, legal action or garnishee in case of default. Recent maintenance orders and those involving people on social assistance were processed first. Existing orders from previous years are being phased in on an organized basis.

The program addresses the problems faced by dependant spouses and children when an estranged spouse defaults on maintenance payments ordered by the courts. Statistics indicate that between 50% to 85% of maintenance orders are in default of payment. Often, the dependant spouse lacks the resources to hire lawyers or agencies to collect. In some cases, the family is forced to accept social assistance to support themselves.

The concept of a central registry and a system of automatic enforcement was recommended in a 1982 report of the Saskatchewan Law Reform Commission, and in a 1985 study conducted by the federal Status of Women.

When the maintenance enforcement measures are completely implemented, dependants will no longer face the stress and burden of enforcing payment. It will ensure that persons responsible for paying maintenance do so, will reduce the demand for social assistance, and will foster respect for the justice system.

In addition, Saskatchewan is actively reviewing its family law provisions as part of a long-term plan to update and consolidate various aspects of law related to the family.

Women and the Economy

Economists and business analysts have noted that an increasing number of businesses are owned or operated by women. It appears that Canadian women are starting small businesses at a rate three times that of men, and that they are more likely to succeed.

With small business expected to lead Canada's economy in job creation over the next few years, it is important to recognize the substantial role of women entrepreneurs in improving the country's economic performance. Women's business success is a major factor in the creation of new jobs and is a positive contribution to economic growth.

During 1985, the Women's Secretariat, in conjunction with Tourism and Small Business and the Federal Business Development Bank, developed special conferences to assist and encourage women entrepreneurs, future entrepreneurs and career women. The conferences were held in Regina on June 11-12 and in Saskatoon on October 25-26.

Guest speakers shared their experiences, and discussed the opportunities and the challenges involved in starting and managing a business. Workshop leaders and panelists offered advice on various aspects of business, including finance, marketing, use of computers, personnel, managing stress, and professional image.

The response to these conferences was overwhelmingly positive, and more are planned during 1986.

Women in the Public Service

Women represent half of the public sector workforce. They tend to be concentrated in traditional occupations, and are under-represented in management and professional classifications.

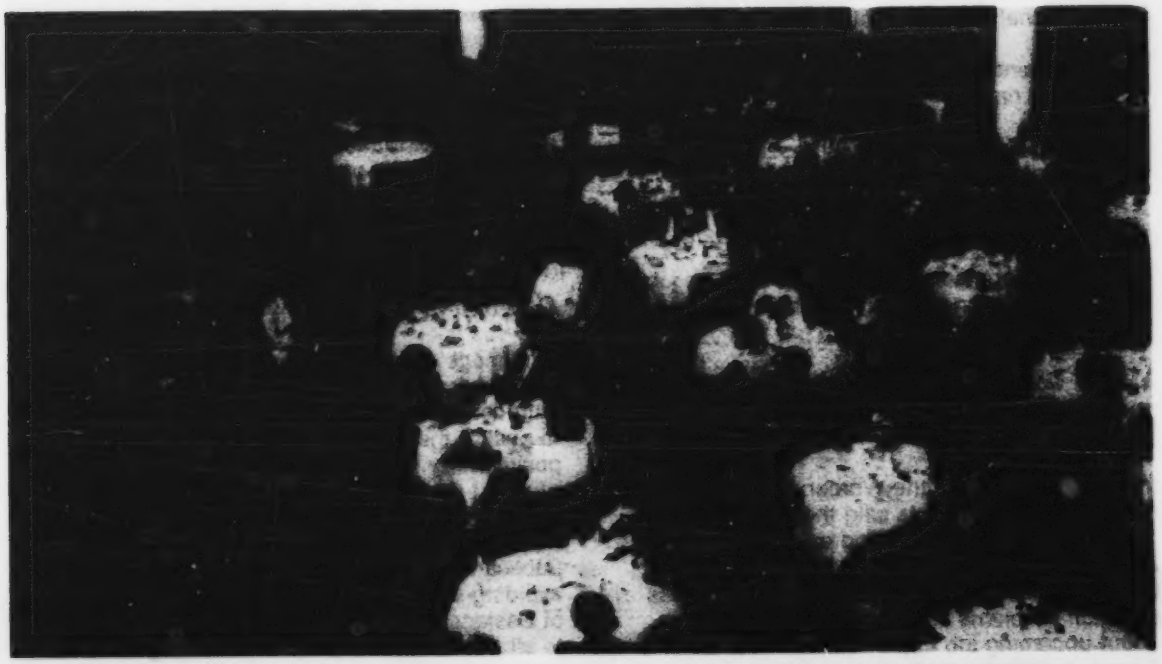
Women in Management Conference

"Getting There and Beyond" was the theme of a special conference for women in public sector management held in Regina on October 29-30 and co-sponsored by the Women's Secretariat and the Public Service Commission.

The two-day conference highlighted the government's commitment to increased representation of women in management. It was a unique opportunity to develop skills and strategies for career progress.

In all, 160 women from executive, senior and middle management took part. While most were from Regina, others travelled from Buffalo Narrows, Creighton, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Rosetown, Saskatoon, Swift Current, and Weyburn.

An impressive line-up of guest speakers shared their views and experiences. A series of workshops focused on job search and interviewing techniques, professional image and the dynamics of work relationships. Deputy



Honourable Pat Smith, guest speaker at the Conference luncheon, urges women to take advantage of educational and career opportunities available to them.

Ministers joined conference participants at the evening banquet, providing an opportunity for networking and discussion.

In an open forum, participants commented positively on the conference and suggested strategies for increasing opportunities for women in public sector management.

Government Adopts New Policy

Based on the success of the Women in Management conference and the positive suggestions put forward in the Conference forum, the government has adopted a policy aimed at a significant increase in the representation of women in management within two years. The policy will be supported by these organizational development initiatives:

- Departmental action plans and annual progress reports
- Steering Committee with representatives from Women's Secretariat, Public Service Commission and Executive Council to monitor progress
- Skill development opportunities, such as job rotations, secondments, task forces and special assignments
- More women trainers, and efforts to ensure all training programs are free of sex-role bias

In their evaluation of the Women in Management conference, participants said they found it beneficial to meet others and exchange information. Networking is an effective way to learn more about various departments, discuss common problems and approaches, and learn about upcoming job opportunities.The Women's Secretariat is developing a formal network for women in management and those aspiring to management.

Stephania Duffee, management consultant, introduces a workshop on job search techniques.

Affirmative Action

In 1985, representatives of the Public Service Commission and the government employees' unions began development of a comprehensive affirmative action for the Saskatchewan civil service. One objective is to increase the representation of women in non-traditional jobs as well as the number of women in management.

A Sense of Balance

The image of women conveyed in advertising and publications has an important influence on attitudes. The Saskatchewan government strives to ensure that women are portrayed in a fair and positive way in all government communications.

Early in 1976, the Affirmative Action Branch of the Public Service Commission released the publication, "A Sense of Balance," as a guide to avoiding stereotypes and reflecting the diversity of Saskatchewan's population. It was distributed to all government departments and agencies to help them maintain a high standard of excellence in all communications programs.

Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women advises the provincial government on ways to improve the status of women.

The Council formulates its recommendations after receiving input from public meetings, consulting with interest groups, and conducting independent research. The recommendations are submitted to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Honourable Patricia Smith.

Members of the Advisory Council are appointed by the provincial government. The present Council was appointed in November, 1983, and, for the first time, representatives from major women's groups across the province were selected as Council members. The 16 members come from various fields of expertise and from different geographical regions, reflecting the diversity of the province and the wide range of public opinion on various issues.

The provincial government provides funds for research and public consultations. The Women's Secretariat supplies the Council with communications services as well as administrative and clerical support.